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Editorial

THE EDITOR offers his apologies for the delay in publishing this number of the *Tyndale House Bulletin*. The fact that it is a double number with a new (and we hope improved) format is clearly no defence for late publication, but may perhaps constitute a plea in mitigation of sentence.

The present number is largely devoted to Papers read at the Tyndale Fellowship Conferences of last July. The Editor feels that members of the Fellowship unable to attend those Conferences may be glad to have some account of them; and that those who were present may be glad to be reminded of what they heard. Within the small compass of a publication such as this it is not of course possible to do justice to all the careful and scholarly papers which were read; but the Editor hopes that the present selection may give some impression of the interest and quality of the proceedings. Mr. Kitchen's paper should prove of interest not only to experts in the wide and rapidly expanding field of Ancient Near-Eastern Studies but also to those unacquainted with the urgent relevance of such studies to the understanding of the Old Testament; Mr. Tongue's paper deals with one aspect of a question often debated by thoughtful Christians; and Dr. Holmes' paper illustrates the contribution that can be made to modern Christian thinking by the researches of Historical Theology.

*Some Egyptian Background To The Old Testament**

by K. A. Kitchen, *University of Liverpool*

THE PURPOSE of this paper is simply to give formal demonstration of the antiquity of certain concepts, and of the antiquity and objective reality of certain usages: concepts and usages which were part of the common intellectual, religious and technical heritage of the Old Testament and Ancient Orient alike. Most of the comparative material is drawn from Egypt, insofar as Egypt is the best such source for, *e.g.*, Israel's contacts with Egypt. However, on wider issues, material has sometimes been taken from other Bible lands too: this paper is in no way an exercise in 'pan-Egyptianism'.

I. CERTAIN CONCEPTS

Personification

Among the most notable passages in Proverbs are chapters viii–ix where Wisdom is personified. All too often this concept is labelled 'advanced' and cited as a reason for regarding that part of Proverbs as the latest in date, well after the Exile[1]. Personification here has even been linked with Greek influence[2].

It is here suggested that late dating of the concept of personification as being 'advanced' is wholly mistaken, and appeal to Greek affinities entirely pointless, if decisive Ancient Near Eastern evidence be given its proper due. Personification of qualities, attributes and objects formed part of the common intellectual heritage of the Ancient Orient, of the Bible lands themselves, from as early as the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. Thus, on the single criterion of personification[3], there is no

* This article is based on a paper read at the Old Testament Study Group, July 1959.

[1] Typical is W. O. E. Oesterley, *Proverbs*, Westminster Comm., 1929, xiii, xxvi.

[2] Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in d.A.T.*; Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the OT*, 1948, 659.

[3] The other, linguistic, criteria often adduced for late date must be dealt with another time.

compulsion or need to date Prov. i–ix any later than Solomon's time in the early 1st millennium BC.

Egypt furnishes a number of personifications of concepts and qualities such as Wisdom. Already in the 3rd millennium BC, Hikē, 'Magic', is personified as a deity in human form in the funerary temple of Sahurē; in the Pyramid Texts (§1324); and even in a priestly title[4]. In the 2nd millennium BC, examples multiply. Best-known are Hu and Sia, 'Authoritative Utterance' and 'Understanding' respectively, in the 3rd and throughout the 2nd millennium BC[5]. In a very battered manuscript (*c.* 1320 BC) of the Middle Kingdom story of *The Sporting King* (*c.* 1900 BC) there occurs the double-barrelled personification Iir-Sedjmy, 'Sight-and-Hearing', a phenomenon paralleled at Canaanite Ugarit, see below[6]. Iret, 'Eye', features in a *Mythological Story* of the same date. The fourteen *kas*[7] of the sun-god Rē, attested from the New Kingdom, *c.* 1500 BC, are shown by later texts to personify a whole series of qualities and states of being[8].

That Egypt had no monopoly of this concept is clear from Western Asiatic documents. Mesopotamia yields a similar series of entities. In the early 2nd millennium, if not before, the goddess Dam-gal-nun-na, wife of the god Enki or Ea, was thought to be served by two ministers Uznu and Khasisu, personifying 'Hearing' and 'Intelligence' respectively[9]. Likewise Namtaru, the messenger of the underworld goddess Ereshkigal, is the personification of the Sumerian Nam-tar, 'Destiny', in a legend on a Tell el-Amarna tablet of *c.* 1360 BC[10]. The underworld itself was sometimes personified as Irkallatu[11]. The personifications Kettu, 'Justice', and Mesharu, 'Law,

[4] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 37, (1915), 253–262; *ibid.*, 39, (1917), 134–137.

[5] Gardiner, *ibid.*, 38, (1916), 43–54, 83–95; *ibid.*, 39, (1917), 138–9.

[6] R. A. Caminos, *Literary Fragments in the Hieratic Script*, 1956, 35; and K. A. Kitchen, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 44, (1958), 128.

[7] The "*ka*" is a spiritual entity too complex to discuss here.

[8] Gardiner, *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, 38, (1916), 84. See further, J. Černý, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, 1952, 58–59; and esp. Gardiner, "Personification (Egyptian)", in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 9, 787–792.

[9] E. Dhorme & R. Dussaud, *Les Religions de Babylonie . . . Assyrie . . . Hittites . . .* etc., 1949, 37, 51.

[10] *Op. cit.*, 39–40, 52.

[11] *Loc. cit.*

Right', also date back to the 2nd millennium BC[12].

The Hurrians and Hittites were also familiar with such concepts: 'Sincerity' and 'Law, Justice' were personified[13], and apparently 'Good' and 'Bad'[14]: The Babylonian Mesharu recurs in Hittite prayers of *c.* 1400 BC[15]. The names of the divine bulls of the weather-god Teshup, Seri and Hurri, are Hurrian for 'Day' and 'Night'[16] Two other personifications are the 'Sea'[17] and 'Torpor(?)'[18].

From N. Syria the Canaanite texts from Ugarit also yield several personifications: one must suffice here – the artificer-god, Kothar - w - Khasis, 'Skill - and - Understanding, Intelligence'[19]. The Hittite, Hurrian and Ugaritic sources all date from the 14th and 13th centuries BC, *i.e.* well within the 2nd millennium.

The foregoing evidence, a selection only, should be amply sufficient to substantiate the claims made at the head of this section. It would be most fitting that Solomon should preface his proverbs proper with an introductory discourse (chapters i–ix), as did some other sages of antiquity[20]; and in personifying Wisdom *c.* 950 BC, he would be using for the expression of divine truths, a figure of mind and speech very appropriate in a world where personification of concepts like wisdom – *e.g.* intelligence, understanding, authoritative utterance, justice, right, skill, etc. – had been familiar over wide areas of the Ancient East for well over a millennium before.

Prediction as a Valid Concept

Prediction of the future was regarded as a valid concept by the Egyptians during at any rate the period of the 22nd to 13th centuries BC, or in Biblical terms from before Abraham down till Moses' time at least. The evidence comes firstly from

[12] *Op. cit.*, 67, 89.
[13] *Op. cit.*, 340.
[14] O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites*, Pelicans, 1952, 194.
[15] H. G. Güterbock, *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 78, (1958), 241, 242, "the personified 'Order of Justice' ".
[16] Gurney, *op. cit.*, 141.
[17] Gurney, *op. cit.*, 192; Güterbock, *The Song of Ullikummi*, 1952, passim.
[18] Gurney, *op. cit.*, 187.
[19] C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual*, 1955, 282; Glossary No. 989.
[20] So Ptahhotep and Amenemope in Egypt.

explicit allusions in literary works and secondly from works which themselves were pseudo-prophecies, *i.e.* counterfeited a recognised concept.

Describing the break-up of Egypt after the Pyramid Age, the Admonitions of Ipuwer (23rd/22nd century BC) allude to 'that which the ancestors had predicted'[21]. The slightly later Teaching for King Merikarē also mentions a prediction of the ancestors and then exhorts him, 'Be not on bad terms with Upper Egypt, for you know about the prophecy of the Residence[22] concerning it'[23]. Later still, the Prophecy of Neferty from the early 12th Dynasty (*c.* 1990 BC) is a pseudo-prophecy set in the reign of Snofru 700 years earlier but especially concerned to show forth the new dynast Amenemhat I as his country's appointed (political and social) saviour. That such pseudo-predictions should be deliberately produced argues directly for the validity of prediction in the eyes of contemporaries[24]. Some centuries later, in a New Kingdom work of about the 13th century BC, a writer extols the wisdom of the sages already ancient in his time and twice speaks of them having foretold the future[25]. From these examples, it is plain to see that the concept of prediction was quite acceptable among the Egyptians (as with the Hebrews), by contrast with the attitude adopted by some varieties of Old Testament scholar[26].

II. SOME PRACTICES

Prefabricated Structures for Religious Use

The Tabernacle which Moses and Israel were commissioned to construct at Sinai has been aptly characterised as 'a portable temple'[27]. Exodus xxvi and xxxvi describe its main features: a

[21] I:10. G. Posener, *Littérature et Politique dans l'Égypte de la XIIe Dynastie*, 1956, 28; transl., Erman & Blackman, *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, 1927, 94.

[22] A term for the pharaoh's palace.

[23] Posener, *loc. cit.*; Erman & Blackman, *op. cit.*, 79, or Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts rel. to OT*, 1955, 416.

[24] So also Posener, *loc. cit.* Transl., Erman & Blackman, *op. cit.*, 110–115 and in Pritchard, *op. cit.*, 444–446 ("Neferrohu").

[25] Papyrus Chester Beatty IV, verso 2:6, 3:7–8, in Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, 3rd Series, 1935, I, 38–9; II, Pls. 18–19.

[26] For modern times cf. F. F. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text, Introduction and Commentary*, 1951, 13 and n.1 on Savonarola and others.

[27] F. M. Cross, *Biblical Archaeologist*, 10:3, (1947), 61.

series of vertical boards or frames[28] each with tenons to fit into silver sockets, and linked along their length by bars through rings, all the acacia-wood being overlaid with gold. Four similarly wrought pillars supported a veil to screen-off the Holy of Holies. The whole was to be covered by dyed linen curtains coupled together with loops and clasps. Over these were placed successively coverings of goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and *taḥash*, most probably worked leather[29].

All too readily in the past, this structure has been dismissed as pure fantasy from the mind of some late priestly compiler[30], or else as a late idealisation of some much simpler kind of tent in terms of Solomon's temple[31]. Of late, however, the existence of some kind of tent-shrine from Moses' time on has found favour with those scholars who adduce as a parallel, the much later pre-Islamic (and later) Arab tent-shrines such as the *qubbah* of red leather often carried on camel-back[32].

Hitherto-neglected Egyptian evidence for prefabricated structures for religious and other uses definitively refutes the charge of late fantasy with very early examples of the constructional techniques so airily dismissed; this evidence at the same time provides a general background for portable structures much closer in most essentials than the very late and inexact parallels afforded by the old-Arabic *qubbah*.

Constructionally, the most striking item in the dossier is the splendid, prefabricated, portable bed-canopy of Queen Hetepheres I, mother of Kheops who built the Great Pyramid,

[28] Hebrew *qerashim*, taken by A. R. S. Kennedy, *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, IV, *s.v.* "Tabernacle", and McNeile, *Exodus*, (Westminster Comm.), diagrams at lxxxiv–v, as open frames rather than solid boards, of which the ends would still form tenons to fit the sockets.

[29] Heb. *taḥash* is probably best derived from the old Egyptian word *tj-ḥ-s*, "to treat leather", Erman & Grapow, *Wörterbuch d. Aeg. Sprache*, V, 396, 7. So Bondi, *Aegyptiaca*, 1–4, corrected by Griffith, in Petrie, *Deshasheh*, 1898, 45–6, and revived by Albright and Cross, *Bibl. Archaeol.*, 10, (1947), 62 and n.22.

[30] J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, Meridian ed., 1957, 39: "the tabernacle rests on an historical fiction" and "At the outset its very possibility is doubtful". A. Bentzen, *Intr. to OT*, II, 34: "... quite unrealistic. . "

[31] So Galling, *Exodus*, 1939, 128ff. Also Cross, *op. cit.*, 63–5, 68, who would allow an ornate Tabernacle as early as David's reign.

[32] Cross, *loc. cit.*; the main studies on this are by H. Lammens, *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 17, (1919), 39–101, and J. Morgenstern, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 17, (1943), 153–265; *ibid.*, 18, (1944), 1–52.

c. 2600 BC[33]. This remarkable structure is a framework of long beams along top and bottom separated by vertical rods and corner-posts on three sides of a rectangle, with a lintel beam and other horizontal 'roof-beams' across the top. The entire structure was of wood, was throughout overlaid with gold, had hooks for curtains all round, and consisted entirely of beams and rods fitting together with tenons in sockets for rapid and customary erection and dismantling, just like the Hebrew Tabernacle thirteen centuries later. Clearer evidence of the practicality and actual use at a remote age of the very constructional techniques exemplified by the Tabernacle could hardly be wished for. Moreover, this example is not isolated, and further material helps to span the long period between Hetepheres' canopy and Moses' tabernacle.

During the Archaic Period and Old Kingdom, Egypt's first great epochs (*c.* 2850–2200 BC), other similarly prefabricated structures are known from actual remains and tomb-scenes, and all more or less connected with religious usage[34]. Besides Hetepheres' own bed-canopy which may have been last erected over her coffin, and thus used as a funereal canopy, fragments of canopy poles were found in a royal tomb of the 1st Dynasty at Saqqara[35], taking the history of these structures back to the 29th century BC. Four further canopies are depicted in sculptured tomb-chapels of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Dynasties (*c.* 2600–2200 BC)[36].

A second form of prefabricated structure from the 3rd millennium is relevant not only constructionally but also as having a specifically religious function. This is the Tent of Purification (*ʾibw*) to which the corpses of royal and exalted personages were borne for the rituals of purification both before and after embalmment. From pictures in Old Kingdom tombs, it is clear that these portable 'tents' were sizeable structures having hangings of cloth (like curtaining) upon a framework of vertical

[33] G. A. Reisner and W. S. Smith, *A History of the Giza Necropolis*, II, 1955, the splendid final publication. More accessible pictures in L. Cottrell, *The Lost Pharaohs*, 1950, fig. 23 opp. p. 128, or W. S. Smith, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, 1958, Pls. 30, a; 34.

[34] Reisner and Smith, *op. cit.*, 14–15.

[35] W. B. Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty*, I, 1949, 58, fig. 30.

[36] Reisner and Smith, *op. cit.*, 14 for references.

poles or pillars linked along the top by horizontal bars and beams – again, directly reminiscent of the Tabernacle[37]. In conjunction with these edifices, a similar one, the *sḥ*, 'booth', was used to shelter funerary equipment or the food-offerings for a funerary banquet, all in a religious context. Besides the representations already mentioned, actual remains of at least two of these 'tents' appear to have been recovered. Earliest are wooden fragments from a store-chamber among buildings attached to the Step Pyramid of the 3rd Dynasty king Djoser, *c.* 2650 BC[38]. Then, from the tomb-shaft of Queen Hetepheres were recovered fragments of gilded wooden poles or pillars, copper fittings and limestone sockets for the pillars: the same techniques all over again[39].

From the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 2000–1570 BC), contemporary with the Patriarchs, the evidence is at present less direct, but see just below.

The remaining evidence comes mainly from the 18th and 19th Dynasties, *c.* 1570–1200 BC, *i.e.* during the period of Israel's Egyptian sojourn and including the lifetime of Moses (13th century BC). In the great temple of Amūn at Karnak in Thebes, Tuthmosis III (*c.* 1470 BC) erected a great Festival Hall, a translation into stone of a large tent-structure supported on wooden pillars whose special forms were imitated[40]. It appears to be linked with the 'Sed'-festival, celebrated to obtain renewal of a king's powers. In that festival, at all periods from the 1st Dynasty through the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms down to the end of Egyptian history, its special rituals seem to have required light pillared pavilions on daises, which could be put up for the occasion and then dismantled again.

In the tombs of the New Kingdom pharaohs it was customary to instal at burial four great prefabricated wooden shrines, gold-overlaid, which were nested concentrically over the coffins of the dead pharaoh. The only complete set surviving

[37] B. Grdseloff, *Das Aegyptische Reinigungszelt*, 1941, plus E. Drioton, *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, 40, (1940), 1008. Good pictures of "Tent of Purification" showing construction in Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, V, 1952, Pls. 42, 43.

[38] Reisner and Smith, *loc. cit.*

[39] *Loc. cit.* with Pl. 3.

[40] Lange and Hirmer, *Egypt*, Phaidon, 1956, Pls. 137–9.

comes from the tomb of Tutankhamūn, *c.* 1340 BC, only shortly before Moses' time[41]. Each shrine is rectangular, roofed, and has double doors at one end; each was prefabricated in several sections which were then assembled in the king's tomb. These sections fitted together with tenon-and-mortise joints and dowels, and the woodwork was overlaid with gold throughout. The largest shrine was about 16½ feet long by 11 feet wide by 9 feet high.

For the portable tent-structure strategically placed in the centre of a rectangular camp of the tribes (cf. Nu. ii, x), the abode of Israel's sole Sovereign with His people, it is significant to note that the same strategic layout was utilised by Moses' contemporary Ramesses II in his Syrian campaigning; the divine king's large portable war-tent was pitched in the centre of a rectangular encampment of the army-divisions[42]. Perhaps in this Moses exploited his Egyptian training in the service of his God and nation. It is especially noteworthy that this Egyptian comparison should come from the very century in which Moses lived. Later, in the 1st millennium, such military camps apparently changed their shape: those shown on Assyrian royal reliefs are round[43]. That tabernacular structures for religious purposes were not wholly peculiar to Egypt is perhaps indicated in the Ugaritic story of King Krt who performs certain rituals in a tent[44].

The upshot of all this is quite clear. The methods of construction employed and the use of such prefabricated structures for religious purposes are abundantly attested by actual remains, pictures and texts in Egypt over a long period of time, many examples long pre-dating Moses. Hence it is now entirely unnecessary to dismiss either the concept or construction of the Tabernacle of Ex. xxvi, xxxvi as fantasy or free idealisation. The Egyptian data here adduced cannot of course directly prove the early existence of that Tabernacle, but it does create a very strong presumption in favour of the reasonableness and veracity of the straightforward Biblical account.

[41] Most accessible photos, P. Fox, *Tutankhamūn's Treasure*, 1951, Pls. 18 and 21.

[42] E.g. Battle of Qadesh, *c.* 1285 BC: Ch. Kuentz, *La Bataille de Qadech*, 1928–34, Pls. 34, 39, 42.

[43] Cf. G. Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria*, 1954, Pl. 17.

[44] So C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature*, 1949, 5–6, and 71 (*Krt*, 159ff).

Possibility of Hebrew Artisans at the Exodus

In connection with the Tabernacle, it is sometimes objected that as a subject-race before the Exodus, the Hebrews would have no skills such as the work of the Tabernacle required, and could hardly have obtained the necessary materials even from spoiling the Egyptians[45]. However, this is far from being necessarily the case. Although many Semites in Egypt were put to forced labour on brickmaking[46], and transporting stone for buildings[47], some had other occupations.

During the New Kingdom, period of the Sojourn and Exodus, there is ample if somewhat generalised evidence for varied employment of foreign slaves, especially in the workshops and stores ('ergastula') attached to temples and government institutions[48]. Instead of dragging stone, some Apiru are to be found more congenially employed as vintners[49]. Numerous tomb-scenes show [50] how greatly the Egyptians prized Semitic craftsmanship in precious metals when exacting tribute from Syria-Palestine – and among the many Semites captive in Egypt, craftsmen would be no less valued. Such Semites could rise to official posts[51] and in Ramesses II's reign some were even trained for office[52]. The wealth of Egypt available in the E. Delta in the 13th century BC must have been very considerable, for Pi-Ramessē, Ramesses II's opulent Delta capital was situated there in a prosperous region whose wonders were lyrically praised by contemporary scribes[53].

In view of these indications various skills would be represented among the Hebrews and 'mixed multitude' who left Egypt; amply sufficient skills to furnish a Bezalel and an

[45] S. R. Driver, *Exodus* (Cambs. Bible for Schools), 1911, 426–7; McNeile, *Exodus*, (Westm. Comm.), lxxxi.

[46] See D. J. Wiseman, *Illustrations from Biblical Archaeology*, 1958, 44–5, fig. 38.

[47] Mention of Egyptians and 'Apiru 'who drag stone to the great pylon', Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 1954, 491.

[48] A. M. Bakir, *Slavery in Pharaonic Egypt*, 1952, 44–45, 110–115; Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, II, 1947, 209*–210*, No. 430; G. Posener, *Syria*, 18, (1937), 183–197.

[49] T. Säve-Söderbergh, *Orientalia Suecana*, 1, (1952), 5–14.

[50] E.g. Wiseman, *op. cit.*, fig. 29, opp. p. 34.

[51] J. M. A. Janssen, *Chronique d'Egypte*, 26, (1951), 50–62.

[52] S. Sauneron and J. Yoyotte, *Revue d'Égyptologie*, 7, (1950), 67–70.

[53] Caminos, *op. cit.*, 37–8, 73–4, 101, and cf. 198–201. Abridged, Pritchard, *Anc. N.E. Texts*, 470–1.

Oholiab, and from the Egyptians in the E. Delta at that particular epoch spoils (Ex. xii, 35–36) amply sufficient for the work of the Tabernacle.

Agricultural Statutes before Settlement in Canaan

It has sometimes been suggested that the provision in the Pentateuchal laws for the regulation of agricultural and settled life could not antedate Israel's settlement in Canaan, or have been given at Sinai where it would be irrelevant to nomads[54]. However, this view fails to allow for a whole series of facts which make it much more prudent to retain the Biblical account of Moses legislating intelligently for imminent occupation of Canaan.

Firstly, from the start, there is no evidence that the Hebrews were ever nomads in the conventional modern sense of desert Bedouin. Ur of the Chaldees was a typical urban community based directly on a thoroughly agricultural and pastoral economy, as throughout early Mesopotamia[55]: hence, the Patriarchs could be pastoralists and agriculturalists from the outset. All round the so-called Fertile Crescent, semi-nomadic people with their flocks and herds were to be found moving slowly past or between the cultivated fields of the settled agricultural populations[56], and sometimes themselves engaging in some modest grain-growing or even settling down[57]. It is thus no surprise to see Isaac growing an odd season's grain in Gen. xxvi, 12[58], or to find Joseph's first dream set in the harvest-field, Gen. xxxvii, 6–7. On this combined Biblical and extra-biblical evidence, even the Patriarchs were by no means simple desert nomads on the eve of their entering Egypt.

[54] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena . . . ,* 1957 ed., 93: "Agriculture was learned by the Hebrews from the Canaanites in whose land they settled, and in commingling with whom they . . . made the transition to a sedentary life." And likewise some more recent writers.

[55] Cf. H. Frankfort, *Birth of Civilization in the Near East,* 1951, 57ff, and ch. III generally; the modern contrast between town and country was meaningless in early Mesopotamia.

[56] See statement of "ass-semi-nomadism" in Albright, *Archaeology and Religion of Israel,* 1953, 96–102; but note that camels, domesticated, are now attested in an 18th century BC ration-list from Alalakh, Wiseman, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies,* 13, (1959), 29 (269:59, GAM.*MAL*), and A. Goetze, *ibid.,* 37.

[57] Cf. J. R. Kupper, *Les Nomades en Mésopotamie au Temps des Rois de Mari,* 1957, 31, 59, 75, 77, 91, 98–9, etc.

[58] As noted by C. H. Gordon, *Introduction to OT Times,* 113.

It is at this point that conditions in the Egyptian E. Delta become relevant. For 430 years, Israel lived and multiplied in that area. During that entire period they lived in a prosperous region famed alike for its cultivated crops, its rich pastures and its marshes full of game-birds and fish[59]. It is inconceivable that Israel should fail to gain agricultural experience, having begun some crop-growing before entering Egypt and being constantly confronted with its practice for four centuries thereafter. Deut. xi, 10 indicates that in fact Israel did respond to conditions in Egypt. Furthermore, there was every facility for the inhabitants of the E. Delta to know of conditions in nearby Canaan: there was constant coming and going over the frontier[60] by both Egyptians and Semites[61]. Hence, there is no reason why Moses or anyone else in his position should not have been able to plan for life in agricultural Canaan.

Finally it is important to remember that when the agricultural regulations in Ex. xxi–xxiii, etc. were proclaimed at Sinai, Israel then anticipated speedy settlement in Canaan; it was only after this that they brought upon themselves the judgement of 40 years' sojourn in the wilderness, Nu. xiv, 26–35. Likewise, references in Deuteronomy to agriculture, living in houses, etc. must be considered against the occupation of Transjordan by two and a half tribes before Moses' oration and death, and against four centuries' sedentary life in Egypt.

Thus the Biblical references and the Egyptian and allied background together provide a clear and realistic picture which we are not entitled to doubt in the absence of any objective external data to justify such doubts.

III. SOME LITERARY BACKGROUND

Transmission of Family Records for Long Periods

It is often assumed that written family records concerning the Patriarchs may have been handed down from Joseph's time through the four centuries of the Hebrew sojourn until Moses' day, and that such records were used by Moses and so lie

[59] Lyrical scribal descriptions of Pi-Ramessē area, Caminos, *L. Eg. Miscell.*, 73–4 (*Anc. N. E. Texts*, 470–1); cattle and crops, Caminos, *op. cit.*, 307.

[60] *Ibid.*, 108–9 for the journal of a frontier-official (*Anc. N. E. T.*, 258–9).

[61] *Ibid.*, 293 (*A.N.E.T.*, 259) for Edomite tribesfolk entering the Succoth region for pasture. Runaway slaves escaping from Egypt, *ibid.*, 255 (*A.N.E.T.*, 259).

behind the present book of Genesis[62]. Some indirect support for this thesis can be obtained from Egyptian sources which show clearly that transmission of family records over long periods of time was perfectly practicable. This evidence comes from genealogies and legal documents.

Genealogies. At least seven[63] long genealogies are known, each spanning several centuries; they vary in date from the 20th to the 4th centuries BC – in Biblical terms, from the age of the Patriarchs to that of the Persians. They usually give the names and titles in the male line, and sometimes the wives are also named.

1. Ukhhotep, son of Ukhhotep and Mersi, was a Count of the 14th Upper Egyptian nome (province) who lived in the reign of the 12th-Dynasty king Amenemhat II, *c.* 1925 BC, the period of Abraham. In his tomb-chapel, he had sculptured a complete list of his 59 forebears and predecessors-in-office with their wives, each by name and apparently in chronological order[64]. The earliest ancestor of the series seems to have lived in the 4th Dynasty *c.* 2500 BC, so this record spans about 600 years, or half as long again as the four centuries from Joseph to Moses. The differing styles of the names indicate the genuineness of this document.

2. On a slab in the Berlin Museum[65] one Ankhef-en-Sekhmet, a priest of Ptah and Sekhmet, and living late in the 22nd Dynasty at *c.* 800/750 BC, traces back his ancestry for 60 generations far back to the distant reign of Nebhepetrē Mentuhotep I of the 11th Dynasty, *c.* 2050 BC, covering thus the incredible span of some 1300 years. This is more than thrice the length of the four centuries' period from Joseph to Moses. At intervals, the names of contemporary kings are mentioned, the later part of the document is confirmed by two independent monuments in Cairo and Paris, and the names fit

[62] E.g., J. Astruc, *Conjectures sur les Mémoires . . . que Moyse s'est servi . . .*, 1753; P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*, 1948, 79–89; J. S. Wright, *How Moses Compiled Genesis—A Suggestion.*

[63] An eighth of late date and very incomplete is preserved in the Ny Carlsberg Museum, Copenhagen.

[64] Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir*, III, 1915, 16–21, Pls. 10, 11, 29, 33:1, 35:1, 36:1, 37:1, 2. Further studied by L. Borchardt, *Die Mittel zur Zeitlichen Festlegung von Punkten der Ägyptischen Geschichte und ihre Anwendung*, 1935, 112–114.

[65] Fully edited by Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 96–112 with Pls. 2, 2a.

the periods assigned them, so that the genuineness of this record also is beyond doubt. That these two genealogies, if remarkable, are not unique is shown by the existence of the following five examples.

3. Harkhebit, a priest who apparently lived *c.* 700 BC in the general period the 22nd to 26th Dynasties, has left record of 17 lineal ancestors reaching back to the late 18th Dynasty *c.* 1350 BC, and so spanning roughly 650 years[66].

4 & 5. In the 3rd year of the 25th Dynasty king Tanutamūn *c.* 661 BC, two newly-inducted priests exhibited their ecclesiastical pedigrees by leaving a record of 13 ancestors in the one case and 16 in the other, reaching back some 340 to 400 years to between 1000 and 1100 BC[67].

6. When visiting the quarries in Wady Hammamat in the desert E. of the Nile in the 26th year of Darius I (*c.* 496 BC), the chief architect Khnumibrē left a long record of 22 ancestors extending back at least 750 years to the time of Ramesses II of the 19th Dynasty[68]. Besides its value in the present connection (long transmission), this genealogy is of interest in covering about the same span of time as that of the Hebrew high priests in the Old Testament; like theirs it also shows several repetitions of certain names in various generations. Such repetitions merely illustrate the sustained popularity of such names over a period and must not be dismissed as mere doublets in either case.

7. Finally, a slab from the tomb of Patjenef, a high priest in Heliopolis (Biblical On) who lived in the 30th Dynasty *c.* 350 BC, shows him offering to 12 ancestors, 'his fathers and mothers', who probably covered some 400 years back to *c.* 700 or 750 BC[69].

These examples all show the feasibility of accurate transmission of family lineage over very long periods of time, and are comparable in general style with the '*toledoth*', 'generations', of Gen. v and xi. The legal documents next to be cited show a

[66] Hieratic stela, Mariette, *Karnak*, 1875, Pl. 46, transcribed by Spiegelberg, *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, 24, (1902), 320–4.

[67] Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 93–4 with references.

[68] Couyat and Montet, *Les Inscriptions Hiéroglyphiques . . . du Ouadi Hammamat*, 1912, 67–9, Pl. 22, Nos. 91, 93–92. Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 95–6.

[69] F. Ll. Griffith, *The Antiquities of Tell el Yahudiyeh*, 1890, 67–8 and Pl. 22, A.

like transmission of other details besides just personal names.

Legal Documents

1. The sale of the Countship of Nekheb (now El Kab, in Upper Egypt) by one Kebsi to his relative Sobknakht in settlement of a debt, dated to the 1st year of Nebiryerau I (*c.*1660/1650 BC). Before consummation of the sale, Kebsi's title to his Countship had to be verified; and documents were examined and cited to confirm that it had come down to him in due legal form from his grandfather who received the Countship in the 1st year of Sobkhotep VI some 40/60 years earlier. The transmission and availability of the legal documents consulted was noteworthy in that the seizure of power by the Hyksos or 'Shepherd Kings' and consequent transfer of the centre of the native Egyptian administration from Memphis to Thebes had all happened between the drawing-up of the first documents and their consultation at the time of Kebsi's sale. This episode falls into roughly the same period as Joseph.[70]

2. The inscription of Mes[71]. This text is a summary of long litigation over ownership of some land, which had involved the production or citation of registers and documents relating to the original grant of the land far back in the days of Ahmose I (1570–1550 BC). The final lawsuit of Mes, the outcome of which occasioned the inscription, took place some years after the 18th year of Ramesses II, *i.e.* after *c.* 1270 BC, giving a span of 300 years from the original land-grant and first records down to Mes's final lawsuit to recover his inheritance. The people involved were private individuals of comfortable station, holding positions connected with the royal administration. This text shows clearly that documents or record of documents were kept over centuries; and that even when such were stored in official archives, the people whose interests they recorded could readily gain access to them when need arose, even though they themselves were just ordinary officials, though by no means illiterate peasants. This text of Mes is the more relevant because it covers most of the very same period which elapsed between Joseph and Moses, and is thus a strictly contemporary example of transmission.

[70] Published by P. Lacau, *Une Stèle Juridique de Karnak*, 1949.

[71] Gardiner, *The Inscription of Mes*, in *Untersuchungen*, IV:3, 1905.

In the light of this varied evidence, it is clear that Joseph as a high minister of state in Egypt would have every facility for recording patriarchal traditions of his forebears, and for transmitting them through the hands of his descendants until Moses' time. Such records need not even have been written in Egyptian; the proto-Sinaitic script was already available for use with Joseph's own West-Semitic dialect[72]. Good papyrus made quite durable documents: witness the sheet from the criminal-register of the prison at Thebes which after 70 year's use at different times still served to record a bequest of servants[73]. And many Egyptian papyri have survived untold centuries to the present day in good condition. So, any documents for which Joseph might have been responsible could readily have survived until Moses' time, with or without occasional recopying. The data here adduced cannot actually prove that such a transmission occurred – but it does create a strong presumption in favour of some such view.

The above brief studies are but a puny handful of points from the great store of information furnished by Egypt and Western Asia. On Egypt and the Old Testament, and on unexplored tracts in the realm of the literary background provided by Egyptian and other texts for study of the structure of the Old Testament, it is hoped to produce further and fuller works in the reasonably near future.

[72] The Shechem Plaque, about the earliest known example at present, dates from *c.* 1800 BC

[73] W. C. Hayes, *A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum*, 1955; its relevance to Joseph's day briefly appreciated, Kitchen, *Tyndale House Bulletin*, No. 2, (1957), 1–2.

*The Concept of Apostasy in the Epistle to the Hebrews**

by D. H. Tongue

THE SUBJECT of Christian apostasy is at once both a personal and an academic one. Every young Christian is at some time exercised by the peril of 'crucifying the Son of God afresh'; and some backsliding believers try in vain to find the place of conscious repentance. The personal issue can best be resolved however, not by isolating it, but by associating it with a sound academic approach to the document which gave it birth. It is proposed in this paper to discuss briefly certain theories about the destination of the Epistle, in order to establish the identity of the readers. Then in the light of these theories we shall attempt to analyse the more familiar passages dealing with apostasy: their vital bearing on our own personal Christian lives must dominate our thinking throughout.

The more popular course will probably always be to picture the readers as Palestinian Jews. How far this theory is traditional is doubtful; since we cannot prove the Epistle was known by the title *To the Hebrews* before A.D. 200 (Clement of Alex.). But a theory which postulates the close proximity of the Jerusalem Temple holds an obvious advantage over others in a document where sacrificial ordinances are so much in the foreground. Admittedly there was another Temple at Leontopolis; admittedly the ritual details are really based on the Tabernacle; yet so powerful was the influence of the Jerusalem Temple on early Christian thought that writers like Westcott feel bound to conclude that the society to whom the letter was addressed lived in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood.

On this theory, apostasy is caused by the ever widening breach between Church and Synagogue. Hebrew Christians who began as the Nazarene Sect within Judaism, and enjoyed the support of the Pharisees and the mass of the Jewish people,

* A paper read at the New Testament Study Group, July 1959.

became the object of Jewish attack at the time of Stephen's martyrdom. At first they

'joyfully accepted the plundering of their property'

(Heb. x.34)

but years of bitter family feud between Church and Synagogue demanded powers of endurance greater than many Hebrew Christians possessed. They abandoned their faith in the Messiahship of Jesus, and shrank back into the fold of Judaism (Heb. x.39) just as Jerusalem's own day of retribution was approaching in A.D. 70.

Before leaving this Palestinian theory, we may perhaps refer to a suggestion made by C. Sandegren (Evangelical Quarterly, October 1955) that the Addressees of Hebrews were the 'great company of the Priests who were obedient to the Faith' in Acts vi.7. He notes more especially the 278 O.T. references in the Epistle, the demand that all should be teachers (Heb. v.12) which contrasts so strangely with the word 'be not many teachers' in James iii.1, and the references to property and hospitality which the Mosaic Law (Lev. xxv.29) safeguarded to her Priests. The Jewish authorities, he suggests, would naturally make a desperate bid to win back these key apostates from Judaism, and re-instate them in the Jerusalem Temple; and the original title may well have been, according to Sandegren, not 'PROS HEBRAIOUS' but 'PROS HIEREIS'. It might even be possible to modify this theory along lines suggested by J. Allegro, and regard the great company of Priests as emanating not from Jerusalem but from Qumran; they might be the true sons of Zadok there resident; the spiritual élite of both the Pharisees and Sadducees, returning from their 'House of Exile' to the Holy City, in readiness to assume control of the Temple at the Parousia of the Priest of Aaron and Israel. Their subsequent apostasy would account for the fact that the Essenes are later mentioned by Hippolytus among seven sects of the Jews who were hostile to the Christian Faith.

If the addressees of Hebrews were Priests, whether orthodox or schismatic, they would have been dominated by the concept of the Covenant relationship. Christianity for them would have consisted in entry into the new Messianic Covenant; apostasy

in the sacriligeous breaking of that Covenant. A few lines from the Manual of Discipline will serve to stress the priestly regard for the sacred Covenant:—

'Cursed be he who enters into this Covenant,
And puts before himself that which causes
him to stumble in sin;
So as to backslide away from God.
May all the curses of this Covenant cling to him;
May he be cut off from the midst of the Sons of Light;
When he backslides from following after God;
May He place his lot in the midst of the eternally cursed.'

(Dupont Summer, pp. 94–95)

This same horror of despising the Covenant would seem to underlie the passage in Hebrews x.28–31.

'A man who violated the Law of Moses died without mercy . . . How much worse punishment will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the Covenant by which he was sanctified?'

Many scholars in recent years have turned away from Palestine and portrayed the Hebrews as a community of Jewish Christians at Rome; possibly a wing of a Jewish Christian congregation in the city. They were drifting away from their Christian moorings back into Judaism for various reasons such as:—

(a) Disappointment over the Parousia (Heb. x.35–8).
(b) The growing pressure of persecution.
(c) The increased strength of Jewish propaganda at home under the Flavian emperors.
(d) The sentimental revulsion produced in Jewish hearts by the fall of Jerusalem.

Their apostasy amounted in fact to a hankering after the ancient Biblical records of the Tabernacle and the cultus. They had 'tasted the powers of the age to come' and then developed a perverse thirst for very weak pre-Mosaic grapefruit. Although some who argue along these lines postulate a late date after A.D. 70 for Hebrews, this is not essential to the position. We know from writers like Philo and Horace that the Diaspora Jews of the 1st century avoided Temple worship, and revived the patriarchal pre-Mosaic worship of the time of Abraham. They possessed, moreover, a notable zeal for proselytising, until

Hadrian forbade circumcision. Any one of Rome's nine synagogues may therefore have counter-attacked the Christian mission after the deaths of her leaders, Peter and Paul, under Nero, and succeeded in enticing some of her members back to a patriarchal form of worship.

So far the theories mentioned have had one thing in common: they recognise the Jewish nationality of the readers. A change of front came over criticism of the Epistle when E. M. Röth maintained that it was intended for Christians of Gentile extraction. Their peril, in his view, lay not in reaction towards Judaism, but in falling away to unbelief, or in disappointment with religion generally, or in succumbing to Hellenistic mystery cults and angel worship. More recently E. F. Scott and James Moffatt have popularised this new approach. They have stressed the absence from *Hebrews* of all reference to the early controversies about Jew and Gentile circumcision, the Law, faith and works; they have argued that the Jewish priesthood and cultus were not living issues among the Jews in Rome in the 1st century A.D.; and they have insisted that the great use made of LXX quotations does not prove that the readers were Jewish Christians, since the LXX was the Bible of the whole church.

Valuable as Dr. Moffat's Commentary is for its rich knowledge of Philo and the Wisdom literature, it fails to explain why a Gentile Christian group, in peril of apostasy, should be treated to irrelevant arguments about Melchizedek and Psalm 110. There is abundant material in the LXX about the gods of paganism and demon sacrifices, and about atheism; and Alexandrian polemic against the inanities of Gentile polytheism provided the Christian apologist with ample answer to a side-slip into heathenism. Yet in fact there is not a word in Hebrews about unbelief in the sense of irreligion pure and simple, nor about pagan rites and mysteries, nor about the moral aberrations of Hellenistic society. The argument for Christianity is presented exclusively in terms of its relation to Judaism.

The essential weakness of Dr. Moffatt's case at this point has recently convinced Prof. W. Manson that the community of Christians established at Rome was predominantly Jewish not Gentile in character. He feels that the Christian mission owed

a great deal to the eschatology of Stephen, who first grasped the more-than-Jewish Messianic office of Jesus. Stephen had perceived the universal range of the Christ-event, whereby the call of God had passed from the Jewish people to embrace humanity at large. While the Hebrew Christians gathered round the Apostles were still continuing steadfastly in the Temple, he saw that Messiah was really on the throne of the Universe: hence Temple worship, sacrifices, and Law, and all holy institutions of the past were transcended: the call of Christ's Church was to leave the Temple and historical securities of the Jewish cultus behind, and to go forward: to proclaim the Son of Man to every nation in the larger world of humanity, rather than to wait for Him to return to Jerusalem. The mobile tabernacle of Israel, featuring both in Hebrews and in Stephen's speech, typified the ever-onward call of God to His people, far better than the static temple ever could.

The impact of the world mission inaugurated by Stephen was felt in Rome by 49 A.D., when Suetonius attributes the Claudian expulsion of the Jews (Acts xviii.2) to the '*Chrestos*' riots. These may have been the original hardships suffered by the Jewish Christians in Hebrews x.32–4. The Jews in Rome, when evangelised by the Christian mission, would not all immediately dispense with their obligation to the sacrificial cultus at Jerusalem. Indeed as late as Acts xxi St. Paul himself was associating with his Jewish brethren in ritual acts and vows. There may well have been a minority in the Roman Church who, in reaction from the larger freedom of the world-mission gospel, were asserting the position of the Hebrew section in the Jerusalem Church. Their tendency, though natural, was retrogade; it missed the reality of the Christian message; they were drifting away, losing their hold on the Christian salvation.

With these various theories of the nature of the apostasy briefly defined, it now behoves us to glance at some of the more emphatic admonitions in the Epistle, and let them speak for themselves. In the first of these (Heb. ii.1–5) the writer uses a nautical metaphor:

> 'We must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.'

He names no special rival attraction to the Christian faith; but

emphasises that a revelation declared by Christ Himself, and evidenced by miracles and spiritual gifts, has a supreme claim to consideration. He contrasts it with the message delivered by angels. The prominence given to Christ over the angels, both here and in the opening chapter, has sometimes promoted the hypothesis that the community was tempted to angel-worship (a very real peril to converts reared in the Mazdaism of the Jewish Sect of the Covenant): or alternatively was in danger of falling away to syncretistic pagan religion, which, like all pagan life, the Jews held to stand under the government of angels (Deut. xxxii.8). But neither to Colossian angel-worship nor to astral religion is there any definite allusion in the rest of the Epistle. It seems therefore more likely that the writer is thinking of the angels as the mediators of the Law (Gal. iii.19), as Stephen did in Acts vii.53, and that the fascination exercised by the Jewish Law was drawing the community into apostasy, whether in Rome or in Palestine.

A second passage is found in iii.1–3:

> 'Therefore, holy brethren, you who share the heavenly calling, consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our confession . . . Jesus has been counted worthy of a higher glory than Moses. . . .'

Here the holy brethren would almost certainly seem to be Jews, whose Apostle was Jesus, in contradistinction to the Gentiles whose Apostle was Paul. In fact in Judaism, the high priest on the Day of Atonement was recognised as the *Shaliach* or Apostle of God. Their designation as 'consecrated' brethren with a heavenly calling may well describe their status as priests in Moses' house. Their calling is not to remain in the house, whether of the Law or of the Temple, but to move out into the more honourable house built by Jesus. It might be that iii.9, with its reference to 'forty years', is a veiled hint to some Qumran priests that it is useless to wait forty years from the death of the Teacher of Righteousness for the signal to move from the House of Exile to the control of the Jerusalem Temple; this would constitute, not a return to rest, but an apostasy from the Living God to whom they have so far been so faithful. At least the forty years yield a significant clue to the date of *Hebrews*; and the general assertion must hold good, *i.e.* that the

Christian life is a new Exodus, an onward march; and that the march begun must continue, rather than halt at some point midway between Judaism and Christian salvation.

There follow a series of short warnings related to the crisis in which the readers find themselves (iii.12 – iv.13). Unbelief for example may result in departure from the 'Living God' (iii.12). Thus must surely refer to the God of Judaism, of whom Gentile pagans had hitherto been ignorant. Rebellion against Christ exposes Christians to that same Divine displeasure as fell on the very people whom Moses led originally. This same example of disobedience is admittedly used in warning a mixed congregation at Corinth (1 Cor. x.); but that does not render it irrelevant to a wholly Jewish body forsaking Christ for the Mosaic wilderness. What is certain from this section is that faith in Christ as the Pioneer and Perfecter of Christian living is the one essential to the attainment of His Rest.

In v.11–12 the author characterises his readers as those who ought to be teachers. Two other N.T. passages spring to mind: James iii.1, where Christians are for the most part warned against desiring to be teachers; and 1 Cor. iii.1, where a similar contrast between milk and solids is introduced. For the Hebrew Christians the foundation principles about ablutions and laying on of hands have long ago been laid (vi.1–2). It is very tempting here to regard the addressees as priests from the Qumran Sect, who not only were familiar with the Purification rites of Judaism, but also practised a kind of Confirmation ceremony. Such priests in Judaism had a duty to teach, and could perhaps master the 278 O.T. references in the Epistle, and the involved instruction on the minutiae of the Jewish Tabernacle cultus. Be this as it may, the writer is not recommending an excursion into Gnosticism, only an advance to Christian maturity as in 1 Cor. ii.6. This advance can come much more easily to Jewish converts, even to such as Apollos or the Ephesian group in Acts xix, than to Gentiles who had never had the elementary principles instilled in early life.

The most famous passage historically now confronts us, *i.e.* vi.4–6, and Tertullian's approval of its denial of a second repentance looms large. But for our purpose two factors should be noted. First, the believers became participants of the Holy

Spirit. This issue is reminiscent of the Ephesian group in Acts xix who did not even know about the Spirit. Clearly the *Hebrews* group had gone much further: they had shared in a Pentecost, where, as in Acts ii, the Spirit and the Last Days had been closely linked. Secondly, their apostasy amounted to re-identification with those who crucified Jesus, *i.e.* with the Palestinian Jews. The writer can only hope that such a catastrophe is more hypothetical than real.

The passages in chapter x have already been mentioned briefly. In verses 19–24 the writer presents the whole pattern of Christian life as worship. It is an approach through the Veil to the Holy Presence of God, made possible through a true ablution of baptism and the blood of Jesus. The appeal of such teaching would come with extreme vividness to priests who had ministered either at the Jerusalem Temple or at Qumran; for it sees worship as the priest sees it, as the norm of life. The verse which follows (25) is open to many interpretations.

> 'Let us not discontinue meeting together as the habit of some is,
> Rather let us exhort each other, the more so as you see the Day drawing near.'

It has been used of Gnostic Christians seceding from the Church, or of conservative Jewish Christians, giving up the Christian meetings on the ground of their freedom from ceremonial observance. The Day may well be that of A.D. 70.

x.26–30 returns to the theme of vi.4–6. A deliberate contempt for God's revelation in Christ will involve retribution more terrible than the death penalty attaching to defiance of the Law of Moses. It is repudiation both of the baptismal confession of Jesus as Son of God (possibly accompanied by the actual statement that Jesus is Anathema), and of the New Covenant, which the Qumran priesthood especially upheld, and which Jesus sealed with His blood. Almost certainly it involves a return to the Old Covenant of Judaism.

Finally in x.32–39 the author recalls the readers' loyalty in the former days of persecution, whether in A.D. 49 or in the time of Stephen; he makes a last appeal to them not to fling away their reward, and reiterates Stephen's faith in the world mission of the Church which must anticipate the near return of Christ.

Any conclusion reached on the nature of the Apostasy in *Hebrews* must be tentative, in view of our uncertainty as to the document's date and destination. The balance of the evidence would suggest that the readers were Jewish Christians, who were tempted to return to Judaism instead of advancing to Christian perfection. There seems no very grave objection to the recent suggestion that they were the company of priests in Acts vi.7, or even that they emanated from Qumran. They may even have hoped, as the true sons of Zadok, to establish themselves in the Temple at Jerusalem when the day of A.D. 70 actually dawned.

For ourselves, however, the warnings about drawing back and flinging away our Christian reward remain as pertinent as ever. Though Judaism may exercise none of its ancient fascination for the Christian Church, she will never be short of the faint-hearted and the backsliding, nor of those who shirk the responsibility of teaching. The age-long peril of apostasy will be countered only by the age-old practice of this inspired writer:

> 'By looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.'

Tertullian on Prayer

by Dr. O. W. Holmes

THE FACT that the Tyndale Fellowship exists "for Biblical Research" is not intended to restrict the interests of its members to a narrow interpretation of the phrase, as is evidenced by the existence of its Church History Group, which yields evidence of light shed down the ages by those who have found in our Scriptures the source of their message to their day and age.

We have, in the Church of Carthage of Tertullian's day, almost a perfect subject for the detached study of the place which prayer occupied, or should occupy, in a church whose very founder (if it had one) we do not know, living close (but not too close) to the cradle of the Christian faith in both time and place, as seen through the eyes of a man originally a member of

the "great Church", and yet identified with that late upsurging of the prophetic impulse associated with the name of Montanism.

As far as Tertullian's personal history is concerned there has been speculation in plenty, but really there is not a great deal known. St. Jerome tells us[1] that Tertullian's father exercised an office of proconsular centurion: we can see for ourselves that Tertullian had reached a mature age by the date when the *Apologeticum* was written (A.D. 187) and he tells us himself that he had once jested at Christians, frequented the Spectacles and otherwise played the pagan. He was a married man; as to whether he was a priest of the Catholic Church much writing even now has not fully reconciled divergences of view. We shall find that Tertullian's beliefs did not, contrary to the assumptions of some, undergo any greater change than that often to be found in the writings of a man who is before the public for two or three decades[2], but historical accident caused him to part from the Catholics, so that views he may have hesitated to express openly in his earlier writings are recorded without restraint when he had left their Church. Speak of him how we will, there is something of the heroic (in its finer sense) in the spectacle of a man from the cultured levels of the world of his day espousing a cause mainly identified with the unprivileged, and standing forth fearlessly as the Christians' champion, without question risking his own position and his own life for the sake of his new brethren.

The most superficial reading of Tertullian's works will show how largely his thinking and his arguments for convincing his opponents rest upon Scripture. We are explicitly told in one of Tertullian's early writings that he regards the Old Testament writings as *divinas*[3], and that the Holy Spirit has instructed the prophets in the truths of salvation[4]: there is no reason to suppose that these views suffered any change over the years during which he wrote. The New Testament is bracketed with the Old in standing[5], indeed it is the fruit of which the Old

[1] *De viris illustribus* LIII.
[2] This is a study in itself.
[3] *Apol.* xx.
[4] *Apol.* xviii.
[5] *De Prae. Her.* xxxvi.

Testament is the seed[6]. Tertullian's range of quotations is broadly based, and of our canonical books he employs all but Ruth, Esther and Haggai. For the Old Testament the Septuagint version was his stand-by; in quoting the New Testament he employs his own translation from the Greek, or an extant Latin version, at will. In the employment of Scripture as warrant for his views he set himself the standard: *pauca multis, dubia certis, obscura manifestis adumbrantur*[7]. In short, his basis was broad, and his principles of interpretation were sound.

The sufferings of the Scillitan martyrs (A.D. 180) were apparently followed in Africa by a period of calm for the Christians, but this would be precarious, and liable to interruption at the whim of the governor. There must surely have been martyrs about the year 197 to justify the *ad Martyras*, and again to call forth the *ad Scapulam* in 212. Such happenings explain much of the frequently burning vigour of Tertullian's style, and unless we keep in mind considerations of this sort we shall not enter into the circumstances in which his teaching on any subject, prayer included, came to be given. His own words on the efficacy of persecution to quicken spiritual life come from the lips of a man who knew what he was talking about[8].

One of the themes for which the writings of Tertullian may with profit be studied is the place of prayer in the life of the Church at that point. From the writings of some we might be tempted to conclude that little but formal liturgies could be found in the corporate worship of the early Church. There are more than two hundred passages in which Tertullian treats of prayer. He uses in all about seventy different turns of phrase (in the Latin) in relation to prayer. Apart from the frequent, and relatively colourless, *orare* and *oratio*, he uses (notably in his later writings) *adorare* on nineteen occasions and *exorare*, with its thought of prevailing in prayer, eleven times. Study of the incidence of his terms will show that prayer is represented not only as a duty but also as a right – *postulare* occurs 34 times, more frequently as the years succeed. Prayer meditative and mysticism are not found frequently, but Tertullian is clearly

[6] *Adv. Marc*, vi 11.

[7] *De Pud.* xvii. *al.*

[8] "Than when is trust in God more strong . . . than when persecution breaks out? . . . better disciplined in fasts, in prayers . . ." *De Fuga* i.

attracted to the idea of prayer as the natural fellowship of friend with Friend. He employs *loqui*, the easy talk of one with another, and describes Abraham as *vir divinae familiaritatis*[9].

Tertullian is known to have written forty-three treatises, of which we are fortunate enough to possess thirty-one; of the others we have knowledge in most cases from references in extant works. No doubt some of these lost works would add something to our knowledge of Tertullian's views, particularly his *de Ecstasi*, which Jerome tells us[10] had seven parts. This aside, the early years of the present century saw virtual agreement on the order in which Tertullian's surviving works had been written, and our remaining space shall be devoted to giving, in chronological order, the main aspects of his treatment of prayer in some of the more important treatises from this point of view. There are over 220 passages in which he throws light on prayer, and the figures given in parentheses show the number of passages in the work cited:

A.D. 197 Apologeticum (*18*) – Pagan prayer is portrayed as widespread, but as external rather than sincere, external in its manifestations as well as in the benefits it seeks. In sharp contrast to this, Christian prayer is earnest; it is rightly based, both as regards its destination and its entitlement; and it has for a main thesis the well-being of the Emperor.

197–200 De Testimonio Animae (*5*) – The unstudied ejaculatory prayer of the pagans is testimony to the existence of a supreme God, above the lesser godlings who are by custom addressed. The pagans also think to work good or ill to the dead by invocations or imprecations.

200 De Spectaculis (*2*) – Attendance at the Spectacles not only puts prayerful thoughts out of the mind at the time, but forms a wholly incongruous sequel to corporate prayer.

200–6 De Oratione (*29*) – The first nine chapters centre round the Lord's Prayer, its Divine preceptor, its comprehensiveness in worship, in submission, in petition. The treatise then broadens out to a review of inward hindrances to prayer, and of sundry outward observances; and finds its conclusion in a quite lyrical exaltation of Christian prayer and its efficacy.

[9] *De Res. Carn.* xviii.
[10] *De viris illustribus* LIII.

200–6 Adversus Iudaeos (*5*) – The faithfulness in prayer of a Moses or a David is sharply contrasted with the futility of contemporary Jewish prayer. The real successors to those who reached great heights of prayer in Old Testament times are not the Jews of Tertullian's day, but those, of every nation, who now invoke Christ.

(*206*) *De Virginibus Velandis* (*4*) – The gravamen of his charge against the virgin unveiled at prayer is the irreverence and audacity before God this displays at a time of special solemnity.

(*208–11*) *Adversus Marcionem I–V* (*42*) – At this point we enter on the period of the established writer turning his attention to the more profound aspects of the faith, not excepting the place of prayer in such deeper thinking. It is most regrettable that so little attention has hitherto been given to these important writings. In *Book One* Tertullian speaks of the universality of prayer to God, the rational basis of such thought, and the fitness of prayer directed to the source of all good gifts. In *Book Two* reverence is postulated, and God is shown as (logically, in view of His nature) guiding the course of history so that man might attain to intercourse with Him: "God held converse with man, that man might learn to act as God"[11]. And as against Marcion's teaching that for God to change His purposes following prayer was unworthy of Godhead and hence to be dismissed, Tertullian rises high to show that these changes of purpose are but tactics in a broad strategy of raising men to fellowship with God. *Book Three* cites Old Testament examples of the types under which this purpose of God was concealed – concealed intentionally, the better to evoke man's sense of need and cause him to cry for aid. *Book Four* is concerned to show that the Old Testament is of a piece with the New, in its teaching on prayer as in other realms. *Book Five* is for our purpose less relevant, but it does speak of the access to the Father won for man by Christ.

(*208–11*) *De Resurrectione Carnis* (*11*) – With the eternal verities of the bliss hereafter in view, the Christian naturally prays for the end of this world; in the after-life there is both

[11] *Adv. Marc*, ii. 27.

prayer and praise, with continuity in both cases from the life beyond death.

(*Post 213*) *Adversus Praxean* (*8*) – The error of Praxeas caused Tertullian to distinguish between the persons of the Trinity and, consequentially, to distinguish between their roles in relation to prayer. The Son, he says, is He who in the Old Testament Theophanies trained men in Divine discourse; the Son when on earth was distinct Person (as when He prayed to the Father in heaven); and His prayer for the Comforter to be sent shows the third Person of the Trinity to be distinct too.

(*217–22*) *De Pudicitia* (*12*) – In this treatise the place of prayer in relation to the remission of sins of others is considered; the case of Jeremiah and the words of John are reviewed as showing that there is a limit to such intercession. And the abuses attending intercessory prayer in Tertullian's day are denounced. On the other hand, he considers that we rightly pray that venial sins be pardoned.

There is a vast amount more that Tertullian has for us in this great theme of prayer – the philosophy of prayer, its theology and its practice, but perhaps the foregoing paragraphs will have served as an introduction to a field that has rich ore for those who will mine there.

*The Altar in Joshua and Judges**

by J. P. U. Lilley

THE OBJECT of this paper was to study the evidence in the text on Israelite methods of building altars, and to consider what were the differences from Canaanite custom. Little is said directly in the text. The Law (Ex. xx. 24ff.) prescribes earth or rough stone altars, with the intention that they should be temporary, just as the earth filling of the tabernacle altar would leave no permanent memorial; this is borne out by the facts stated or implied in Judg. xx–xxi, while the permanent 'altars' on Ebal (Josh. viii. 30ff.) and by Jordan (Josh. xxii. 10) were for different purposes.

* Summary of a paper read at the O.T. Study Group, July 1959

Some Canaanite altars may have been natural rock surfaces, but not all; the altar which Gideon had to pull down was substantial, and the words used for breaking it suggest an erected structure. No case can be made for an early Israelite custom of using natural altars; of the instances recorded (Judg. vi.20, xiii.19: 1 Sam. xiv.33), the first was almost unintentional and the other two took place under conditions of general difficulty and apathy. Gideon and Saul both erected altars for regular sacrifice almost immediately.

The absence of '*asherim*' ('groves') from orthodox Israelite altars is certain; and although the term *massebah* ('pillar') occurs, the context always makes it clear that there is no idolatrous connotation. (Judg. ix.6 with Josh. xxiv.26; cf. Ex. xxiv.4)[1].

The debate continues on 'centralization' (which has become something of a catchword; we need to consider more carefully what it might mean in practice). Since the theory that Josiah's reforms were due to the discovery of Deuteronomy has been refuted (see Donald Robinson's monograph), much has been said against the associated view that the book 'demanded centralization'. If the text of Deuteronomy is not conclusive (though xxii.5 seems hard to read otherwise than as meaning one sanctuary), there is no doubt that the affair of the altar '*Ed* caused a great scandal. The sanctuary of the ark was unique, and we read how Elkanah paid yearly visits (quite apart from festivals). On the other hand it can be argued that the importance of ritual cleansing would have made local altars a necessity. This all bears on the question of how the invasion of Canaan fell short of the original idea.

[1] Apart from these features, the type of altar used does not seem to have been a principal point of opposition between Israelite and Canaanite religion.

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Appointments

J. N. D. ANDERSON. Part-time Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.

J. A. BALCHIN. Lecturer in O.T. and Hebrew, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow.

J. N. BIRDSALL. Lecturer in Biblical Studies, University of Leeds.

P. A. BLAIR. Chaplain and Tutor, Oundle School.

F. F. BRUCE. Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester.

J. DALE. Lecturer in English, United College, Winnipeg.

E. E. ELLIS. Assistant Professor of New Testament, Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

D. W. GOODING. Assistant Lecturer in Classics, Queen's College, Belfast.

A. E. GUILDING. Professor of Biblical History and Literature, Sheffield.

D. R. HALL. Tutor in Cliff College, Sheffield.

D. A. HUBBARD. Chairman, Division of Biblical Studies and Philosophy, Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California.

P. E. HUGHES. Editor of *The Churchman*, and Editor of *The International Reformed Bulletin*.

M. A. JEEVES. Professor of Psychology, University of Adelaide.

D. B. KNOX. Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney.

R. J. MCKELVEY. Tutor in Adams United Theological School, Modderpoort, Orange Free State.

R. P. MARTIN. Lecturer in Dogmatic Theology, London Bible College.

T. C. MITCHELL. Assistant Keeper of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, British Museum.

G. H. W. PARKER. Lecturer in History, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

D. F. PAYNE. Assistant Lecturer in Biblical History and Literature, University of Sheffield.

D. W. B. ROBINSON. Vice-Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney.

J. A. THOMPSON. Lecturer in Old Testament Studies, Baptist College of New South Wales.

A. F. WALLS. Editor of the newly established *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*.

Higher Degrees and Awards

J. N. BIRDSALL. Degree of Ph.D., University of Nottingham.
E. A. JUDGE. Cambridge University Hulsean Prize for 1958.
R. J. MCKELVEY. Degree of D.Phil., Oxford University.
I. H. MARSHALL. Cambridge University Carus Greek Testament Prize for 1958; Finch Scholarship, 1959–60, for Post-Graduate study in Germany.
R. S. WALLACE. Degree of Ph.D., Edinburgh University.
J. M. WILKINSON. Degree of B.Litt., Oxford University.

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